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UNCLAS THE HAGUE 002906

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

EUR/UBI FOR S.HOLLIDAY
SA/AR FOR N.KROMASH
USEU FOR P.LERNER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: AF EAID NL PGOV PREL

SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN: UPDATE ON DUTCH PLEDGES AND
CONSULTATIONS WITH THE EU

REF: A. STATE 305542

1B. THE HAGUE 02801

1C. HOLLIDAY-GERBER EMAIL 11/17/03

Ghani Letter

11. (SBU) Dutch Minister of Finance Gerrit Zalm has received the letter from Afghan Finance Minister Ghani (ref A) that concerns an appeal for accelerated pledges, according to MFA Afghan Desk Officer Marit van Zomeren of the MFA in a November 17 conversation with Embassy EconOff. Ms. Van Zomeren did not have details on what the Dutch response will be but says the Dutch are in the process of answering the letter. The latest info from the MFA about Dutch pledges is that they expect to disburse their 2004 pledge of EUR 17.5 million some time in March 2004.

Discussions With the EU

12. (SBU) In other news, EU Special Rep for Afghanistan Vendrell was in the Hague the week of November 10. (Note: German Special Rep Schmunck canceled his planned visit (ref B). End Note.) Vendrell met with Dutch FM de Hoop Scheffer, DG for Political Affairs Hugo Siblesz, and Deputy DG for Development Cooperation Rob de Vos. According to Van Zomeren, Vendrell asked the Minister for the Netherlands to set up or contribute to a PRT, but the GONL maintains that it does not foresee a stand-alone Dutch PRT in the future. Vendrell and the Dutch also discussed the constitution and the upcoming elections. Dutch officials found themselves agreeing with Vendrell on the need for improved coordination on Afghanistan: a) among EU member states; b) between the U.S. and the EU; and c) between NATO and the EU. Vendrell told the Dutch he wants to be present at more U.S.-Brahimi-UK strategy meetings. Separately, Dutch Special Afghanistan Rep Ronald Mollinger has expressed his desire for more contact and coordination with the U.S.

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